

## **Eastern NC Elected Officials Announce Legislative Priorities to Equip Region for Recovery and Resilience from Flood Events**

*Mayors and county commissioners announce funding priorities for critical flood recovery and protection projects*

In a press conference Thursday, elected officials with the Eastern NC Recovery and Resilience Alliance announced six policy and funding priorities for the NC General Assembly.

In recent years, flooding from hurricanes, 1000-year storms, tidal flooding and intense non-tropical storms have caused widespread damage to eastern NC communities. These events revealed the region's vulnerability to more frequent and severe floods demonstrate the need to build more resilient communities.

"Hurricane Florence was nearly the straw that broke the camel's back," said Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo. "That hurricane was the exclamation point at the end of a long series of damaging flood events that compelled elected officials from the eastern part of the state to come together in search of solutions. Our communities had been struggling to recover from damaging floods, and challenged to build back in a way that made us less vulnerable to facing the same threats again the next time a storm or heavy rains rolled through. Through our work together, we've found pathways to recovery and resilience, and now we need the funding to implement the next steps we've identified."

The Eastern NC Recovery and Resilience Alliance is made up of elected officials from the eastern part of the state who have come together to develop collaborative solutions as their communities recover from recent major flooding events and strengthen their resilience to future floods. Officials with the Alliance have been meeting over the past two years and working with national experts at the American Flood Coalition and Environmental Defense Fund to identify policy and funding opportunities to create a more resilient eastern North Carolina.

Today, the Eastern NC Recovery and Resilience Alliance leadership shared six legislative priorities for the NC General Assembly to consider as it allocates funding and shapes policy to help the region better prepare for, respond to, and recover from flood events.

These priorities address key challenges and enable communities to invest in resilience, all while positioning local governments to take advantage of federal funding opportunities. To support resilient communities and landscapes, the Legislature should consider the following actions:

1. Fund an actionable Flood Resilience Blueprint
2. Ensure resilient critical transportation infrastructure
3. Support riverine and stream management to reduce flooding
4. Incorporate resilience investments as an allowable use into any new local revenue authority
5. Increase resiliency capacity and technical assistance to local governments
6. Fund flood mitigation and innovative pilot projects.

"Brunswick County continues to have flooding issues throughout the county," said Brunswick County Vice Chair Mike Forte. "Should the state implement our six priorities it will go a long way to help alleviate our problems. I am proud that the surrounding counties are working together with this."

“The City of Whiteville has been plagued with flooding issues over the years,” said Whiteville Mayor Terry Mann. “The proposals set forth, if achieved, will be a benefit to the entire area of southeastern N.C. We appreciate being included in this regional collaboration.”

“With more frequent inland, riverine flooding like we’ve seen in recent weeks in communities across North Carolina, the need for investment in flood resilience has never been more urgent,” said Melissa Roberts, Executive Director of the [American Flood Coalition](#). “By supporting local governments and investing in resilience, North Carolina has the opportunity to build stronger and better prepared communities across the State. We applaud the Alliance for their leadership on this issue and encourage the General Assembly to swiftly enact these policy priorities.”

“Enacting these priorities will build resilience for eastern NC communities on the frontlines of climate change and demonstrate a pathway for communities all across the state to move forward,” said Will McDow, Director-Resilient Landscapes for Environmental Defense Fund. “These priorities reflect the needs of local communities, developed through dialogue and collaboration. If enacted, they will provide both immediate relief and will set North Carolina on a path to secure an increased share of future federal funding. We're hopeful that our state's leaders in the General Assembly will hear these voices, see these priorities, and take action to fund projects to assist North Carolinians as they build back better, stronger and more resilient.”